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Social Media Usage in Nonprofit Wrestling Organizations: A Cross-Platform Analysis

Chrysostomos Giannoulakis,¹ Lauren Burch,² and Shea Brgoch¹

ABSTRACT. This case study examined the social media use of USA Wrestling during the 2014 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Wrestling Championships in the United States. We performed a cross-platform content analysis of the organization's Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram accounts during the 3 days of the event using a relationship-marketing framework. In addition, we conducted qualitative interviews with employees involved with the National Governing Body's social media implementation. Results indicated predominant use of Twitter and YouTube, with 375 posts occurring during the 3-day event as compared with 8 posts on Facebook and Instagram, cumulatively. Such an approach contradicted interviewees' responses on the popularity of Facebook. Overall, the organization placed particular emphasis on information-sharing posts across the 4 platforms pertaining to wrestling and athletes during the event. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications for wrestling-related organizations.

Keywords: social media, wrestling, national governing body, relationship marketing, sport communication

In an era of continued advancements in social media technology and the rising competition among sport organizations to capture the attention and interest of Internet users, the concept of *relationship marketing* represents a common approach for entities in a media-cluttered environment. Changes in the marketing and communication environment impel the need for sport entities to reform and update their traditional marketing and public relations concepts, with far-reaching implications for social media in the sport setting, given that a plethora of providers exist for each sport product or service. The extensive number of options for information dissemination across various platforms causes social media itself to become an integral aspect of an organization's initiatives (Judson, Devasagayam, & Buff, 2012). Relationship marketing developed from the realization that the classic four Ps strategy (i.e., product, price, place, and promotion) is ineffective and inapplicable in more modern market environments (Gronroos, 1994, 2004; Mullin,

Hardy, & Sutton, 2014; Shani, 1997). The effort to achieve a larger market share through the use of traditional promotional elements has proved to be short-lived and costly for fragmented markets in a dynamic, changing, and highly antagonistic sport business environment (Cousens, 2001; Gronroos, 2004; Mullin et al., 2014; Shani, 1997).

Apparently, the consumption of sport is performed by highly involved consumers with a desire for a long-term association with a team sport or branded product (Cousens, 2001; Shani, 1997). Social media engagement adds value to consumers' association with the sport organization through a sense of empowerment, creating a stronger connection between the business entity and its constituents (Borges & Verissimo, 2014). To this end, social media may provide a competitive advantage for organizations to meet their relationship-marketing goals. Such an approach is particularly prevalent in the sport industry, where consumers become active contributors (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Relative to the context of sport and relationship marketing, this case study examined the issue of social media usage in nonprofit sport organizations, and, specifically, a wrestling-related national governing body (NGB). The terms NGBs and national sport organizations (NSOs) indicate the governing body of a particular sport in a country. For consistency purposes, we predominantly used the term *NGB*, although

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both terms are illustrated in this article depending on the context, accordingly.

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) constitute a segment where social media may become an integral component of the relationship-marketing framework. The number of organizations with a nonprofit status has experienced an unprecedented increase in the United States and worldwide (Pope, Isely, & Asamo-Tutu, 2009; Runté, Basil, & Deshpande, 2009). Consequently, organizations are functioning in a competitive environment, while facing challenges in securing funding due to decreased support from government and federal sources, decline in direct donations, and hesitation by sponsors to invest significantly in nonprofit sectors (Pope et al., 2009). In this competitive context, NGBs have started to become more innovative in their outreach attempts to educate and attract both individual and corporate donors, members, volunteers, sponsors, and partners. Although there is an impelling need for a rather sophisticated and professional social media approach and enhancement of the relationship-marketing dialogue with stakeholders, many NGBs, specifically wrestling organizations, do not adopt such philosophy. This could be attributed to internal and external factors such as a lack of determining what motivates sponsors to support a particular cause, clear targeting and membership orientation, Internet marketing practices, and overall marketing sophistication (Pope et al., 2009).

As the need to maintain and recruit new members and secure corporate sponsorship and donations increases, NGBs will likely need to become more responsive to the needs of their stakeholders through a relationship-marketing approach. Eagleman (2013) performed a quantitative assessment of the social media role with NGBs in the United States relative to their employees' acceptance of social media, motivations to use social media, and the NGB's usage of social media. Results illustrated high levels of acceptance and motivation to use social media and use them more as a communication rather than a marketing tool. In their study of 24 NSOs in Canada, Abeza and O'Reilly (2014) found entities did little to make use of Facebook and Twitter as a medium to create relationship dialogue. For a sport organization, true engagement with users can depend on the level of authenticity offered by the organization's interactions (Pronschinske, Groza, & Walker, 2012), and a failure by NGBs to effectively make use of social media in the relationship-marketing mix may result in improper management of stakeholder relationships.

In recent years, academic studies have investigated the use of social media in nonprofit sectors in general (e.g., Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Lovejoy, Waters, & Saxton, 2012; Nah & Saxton, 2013). Nevertheless, there remains a dearth of research on the use of social media (e.g., Abeza & O'Reilly, 2014; Eagleman, 2013) and the web (e.g., Girginov et al., 2009) by NPOs and NGBs in sport. To begin to fill this void, this article examined the 2014

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Wrestling Championships as a case study to explore the application of relationship-marketing principles by wrestling's stateside NGB through four platforms: Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. Through a content analytic approach, the overarching goal was to examine how USA Wrestling (USAW), as an NPO, used the four social media platforms to produce messages aimed at USAW's target audiences during the collegiate event. The examination occurred in the context of the organization's overall social media strategy and the usage of social media platforms as a means to achieve relationship-marketing goals. We performed this assessment in two ways: (a) comparative analysis of social media platforms and (b) identification of audience interactivity with each platform. In addition, we conducted a qualitative evaluation of USAW's social media strategy with NGB employees to assess the organization's overall philosophy as compared with actual social media implementation. This article makes a contribution to further exploring the use of social media by nonprofit sport entities through cross-platform analysis within a bounded unit of study. Ultimately, this research adds valuable information regarding the role of different social media platforms in achieving relationship-marketing goals of nonprofit sport organizations and, particularly, wrestling-related entities.

Theoretical Perspectives on Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing has emerged as an important discussion point among academics and practitioners with an interest in the field of sport marketing (e.g., Bee & Kahle, 2006; Cousens, 2001; Gronroos, 1994; Lapio & Speter, 2000; McDonald & Milne, 1997; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Mullin et al., 2014; Shani, 1997; Yu & Trail, 2011) and social media (e.g., Abeza & O'Reilly, 2014; Abeza, O'Reilly, & Reid, 2013; Williams & Chinn, 2010; Witkemper, Lim, & Waldburger, 2012). *Relationship marketing* has been defined as "finding ways to integrate the customer into the company, to create and sustain a relationship between the company and the customer" (Mullin et al., 2014, p. 202). Gronroos (2004) further described it as "the process of identifying and establishing, maintaining, enhancing, and when necessary terminating relationships with customers and other stakeholders, so that the objectives of all parties are met" (p. 101). Relationship marketing is different from traditional marketing strategies that focus mainly on attracting new customers in that the former emphasizes retention and development of existing customers. To survive in a highly antagonistic business environment, such as the sport industry, entities invest in long-term and mutually beneficial relationships rather than stimulating a particular transaction or communication. This means sport organizations must develop strong social and structural bonding with their customers (Ravald & Gronroos, 1996).

Relationship Marketing in the Sport Industry

The desire of sport consumers to be highly associated and involved longitudinally with a sport entity or team has caused sport organizations to embrace relationship-marketing strategies and tactics (Bee & Kahle, 2006). Shani (1997) developed a framework for implementing relationship marketing specifically to the sport industry. To illustrate the importance of this framework, Shani defined and distinguished between niche marketing and segmentation and between database and relationship marketing. In concurrence with Gronroos (1994), Shani (1997) further noted the focus of relationship marketing is more on building a long-term and mutually beneficial relationship rather than stimulating a particular transaction.

Over the years, researchers have used various functional approaches to examining relationship marketing in sport by using different sport settings. For example, Cousens (2001) used a contextual approach to investigate the adoption of a relationship-marketing paradigm by the National Basketball Association (NBA). To understand organizational transformations of the NBA, such as the shift from traditional marketing to relationship marketing, we examined the inner and outer context of change, the context of change (i.e., the firm-level transformation under examination), and the process of change. The contextual approach to investigating change may function as a meaningful and effective way to understand transformation within a sport organization, and as an explanatory tool to comprehend the adoption of the relationship-marketing paradigm (Cousens, 2001). Bee and Kahle (2006) illustrated a framework for understanding the reasons and the mediums through which customers engage in relationship marketing. Their framework was based on three different levels of comprehending relationship formation and maintenance (i.e., compliance, identification, and internalization). We also stressed the importance to further understand sport relationships in their full complexity. Last, in a study of 10 Canadian NSOs, Girginov and colleagues (2009) found that although the organizations were receptive to the use of the web for building relationships with participants, their information-gathering and disseminating activities were not particularly integrated, enhanced, and constant.

Relationship Marketing, Social Media, and Sport

Social media may provide the framework for sport entities to focus on two core components: communication and interaction (Witkemper et al., 2012). Williams and Chinn (2010) pointed out the importance of using the potential value and benefits of social media to meet relationship-marketing goals, especially in the sport industry. Sport differs from other sources of entertainment through evoking high levels of emotion and identification that other forms of entertainment are lacking (McDonald & Milne, 1997). The sport

setting has the capacity to cultivate and leverage a long-lasting relationship with prosumers (i.e., proactive consumers; Williams & Chin, 2010) as they become active contributors. Sport entities acknowledge the pivotal role of social media outlets in the development of dynamic platforms that can reach an extended and diverse group of consumers and users. Foundationally, the key for sport organizations is to create the social media framework where consumers can constantly engage and contribute to the lifetime value of the relationship (Williams & Chin, 2010). Eventually, a two-way communication through a variety of social media platforms, as in the case of USA Wrestling, may lead simple users or Internet observers to become active contributors and loyal consumers.

Recently, there has been an emergence of theoretical (e.g., Williams & Chinn, 2010) and empirical (e.g., Abeza et al., 2013; Abeza & O'Reilly, 2014) studies examining relationship-marketing components in the sport social media context. Williams and Chinn (2010) expanded Gronroos' (2004) relationship-marketing process model to describe interactions that occur through social media exchanges. We emphasized the need for an integrative relationship-marketing process to build meaningful relationships with sport consumers through opportunities for communication, interaction, and value. Furthermore, Abeza and colleagues (2013) performed a qualitative case study on eight organizations that manage running events in Canada. We discussed broad and interrelated theoretical opportunities (e.g., better knowledge of customers, efficient use of resources) and challenges (e.g., concern over credibility and reliability of information, lack of control over posted messages) social media presented in addressing relationship-marketing goals of the selected organizations. More recently, Abeza and O'Reilly (2014) investigated how NSOs use Facebook and Twitter to develop a two-way communication with their stakeholders. Their results illustrated a rather apathetic implementation of the aforementioned mediums on cultivating a relationship dialogue.

Despite the existing research on relationship marketing in the sport industry, there is a compelling need for further examination of the effects of social media on relationship-marketing components and goals for sport organizations (Abeza & O'Reilly, 2014). On the basis of the nature of the sport organization and their approach to social media, it is crucial to develop a relationship-marketing framework that incorporates relationship measures into the consumer behavior process. As social media outlets become more expressive and consumers continue to widely share their perceptions, beliefs, and experiences, it has become essential for sport entities to identify and assess the effectiveness of different platforms.

Purpose and Research Questions

Thus far, social media platforms in sporting events have been approached and examined individually relative to their

relationship-marketing effectiveness in terms of communication, sponsorship, advertising, and sales. This case study aimed to determine the use of social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube) by a NGB (i.e., USAW) in one of its most popular annual events (i.e., NCAA Wrestling Championships) in the context of relationship-marketing goals (i.e., opportunities for communication, interaction, and value) outlined by Williams and Chinn (2010). We used a two-phased approach, beginning with a content analysis of posts generated through the four platforms. Second, we performed in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders of USAW to gain insight on the organization's social media approach in general and, specifically, the NCAA championships. Last, the nature of wrestling as an Olympic, amateur, and niche sport was considered throughout the discussion and practical implications.

Because of the exploratory nature of this case study as a cross-platform analysis, the following research questions were generated to guide the analysis of each individual platform and provide a point of comparison on the level of audience interactivity with each platform:

Research Question 1: What types of posts did USAW post on its Facebook page?

1a: How did fans engage with these posts through the use of likes, comments, and shares?

1b: What effect did the use of hashtags (#) and user tags (@) have on post likes, comments, and shares?

Research Question 2: What types of photographs did USAW post on its Instagram account?

2a: How did fans engage with these photos through the use of likes and comments?

2b: What effect did the use of hashtags (#) and user tags (@) have on photo likes and comments?

Research Question 3: What types of posts did USAW post on its Twitter feed?

3a: How did fans engage with these posts through the use of favorites and retweets?

3b: What effect did the use of hashtags (#) and user tags (@) have on post favorites and retweets?

Research Question 4: What types of posts did USAW post on its YouTube account?

4a: How did fans engage with these posts through the use of likes, dislikes, comments, and views?

4b: What effect did the use of hashtags (#) and user tags (@) have on post likes and comments?

Research Question 5: What types of views did USAW employees express regarding the organization's use of social media for the 2014 NCAA Wrestling Championships?

METHOD

We used a single case study approach to address the purpose of the study. Creswell (1998) defined *case study* as "an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context" (p. 61). In terms of its end product, Merriam (1998) described a qualitative case study as an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. The case study method allowed for an examination of USAW and the 2014 NCAA Wrestling Championships as bounded units and produced detailed descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation in this context. The holistic examination of USAW's communication strategy and the cross-analysis assessment of its social media in a single sporting event provided valuable insight to understanding the incorporation of social media into the relationship-marketing mix of nonprofit sport organizations.

Research Context

In 2014, there were 1,829,000 wrestling participants in the United States, and the majority (84%) were male ("Sport & Fitness," 2014). USAW has more than 190,000 registered members, of which 41% are between 18 and 34 years old and 44% have an annual income of \$100K or more. As of March 2014, the official USAW website had 7,100,000 visits, 384,950 likes on Facebook, approximately 99,000 followers on Twitter ("Sports Fan Graph," 2015), 63,400 followers on Instagram, and more than 41,000 subscribers of the NGB's YouTube channel. Between 2009 and 2011, USAW was awarded the USOC NGB Marketing award for three consecutive years among 31 Olympic sports (Cullen, 2011). This annual award recognizes the USOC's most unique and creative marketing and social media initiatives. The NGB is founded upon amateur athletes and invests heavily on the grassroots development of the sport throughout the United States, and it is invested in communicating its mission and values through social media outlets with its stakeholders (i.e., athletes, parents, members, donors, sponsors, volunteers).

Simultaneously, the organization uses social media platforms to promote the historic aspects of the sport as a member of the Olympic family, as well as build upon the popularity of wrestling among grassroots and amateur

participants. Moreover, the NCAA Championships constitute a visible and prominent wrestling event, given that it provides opportunities to stimulate increased interest and traffic through USAW's users, while promoting sponsorships to an extended audience. Despite the fact the NCAA Wrestling Championships are not a USAW-sanctioned event, event coverage by the NGB creates an increased association with collegiate wrestling. One of USAW's key roles as the governing body of the wrestling in the United States is advancement of the sport from grassroots participation all the way to the Olympic Games. Therefore, the NCAA Championships also serve as recruitment and scouting tool for Olympic-level athletes, as in the case of the Ohio State world champion Kyle Snyder. As the governing body of an individualized Olympic sport, USAW capitalizes on sharing stories of select wrestlers throughout its events, with an emphasis on success stories of student-athletes during the NCAA Championships. It is interesting that the USOC is the only National Olympic Committee worldwide that does not receive federal and government funding (Li, Macintosh, & Bravo, 2012). Affiliated NGBs receive funding primarily from members, donors, sponsors, and USOC grants.

Data Collection

We used a content analysis method to examine the organizational content produced by the nonprofit USAW organization on four social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube) during the NCAA Division I Wrestling championships. This method has been used in various sport-related research projects (e.g.,

Angelini & Billings, 2010; Billings, Angelini, & Wu, 2011; Cooper, Eagleman, & Laucella, 2009), as it facilitates the structured and consistent analysis of preexisting content (Krippendorff, 2012). The study focused specifically on the 2014 NCAA Wrestling Championships held in Oklahoma City. A purposive, consecutive day sample (Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2013) of USAW's official posts on the four platforms during the 3-day timeframe of the event was constructed for analysis. Facebook posts, tweets, Instagram photos, and YouTube videos posted from March 20 to 22, 2014, were coded for analysis. This produced a total dataset of 383 items consisting of 7 Facebook posts, 1 Instagram photo, 221 tweets, and 154 YouTube videos.

Codebook

To categorize and analyze the data, a coding protocol and codebook was created for each individual platform based upon previous content analysis conducted in that medium. To facilitate comparisons across the four platforms, variables for analysis were kept consistent. We modified variables during instances where platform functionality differed. Table 1 shows a comprehensive list of variables across all four platforms.

Facebook

Content on Facebook was coded using 16 variables identified from previous research (i.e., Pronschinske et al., 2012; Zimmerman, 2014). Variables included focus of post, purpose of post, post contains visual elements, and types of

TABLE 1 Coding Variables, by Platform

<i>Facebook</i>	<i>Instagram</i>	<i>Twitter</i>	<i>YouTube</i>
V1. Coder	V1. Coder	V1. Coder	V1. Coder
V2. Date	V2. Date	V2. Date	V2. Date
V3. Pre/During/Post Event	V3. Pre/During/Post Event	V3. Pre/During/Post Event	V3. Pre/During/Post Event
V4. Link to Post	V4. Number of Likes	V4. Twitter Handle of Sender	V4. Clip Title
V5. Number of Likes	V5. Number of Comments	V5. Sender's Affiliation	V5. Number of Clip Views
V6. Number of Comments	V6. Caption	V6. Link to Tweet	V6. Number Clip Likes
V7. Date of Last Comment	V7. @ Symbols Used	V7. Tweet Content	V7. Number of Clip Dislikes
V8. Number of Shares	V8. Hashtags Used	V8. Number of Retweets	V8. Number of Clip Comments
V9. Focus of Post	V9. Athlete in Photograph	V9. Number of Favorites	V9. Category of Clip
V10. Purpose of Post	V10. Name of Athlete	V10. Tweet Accompanied by Link	V10. Clip Rating
V11. Visual Element	V11. Focus of Photograph	V11. Tweet Includes Hashtag	V11. Organization of Focus
V12. Type of Visual Element	V12. Organization of Focus	V12. Post Contains Visual Element	V12. Player of Focus
V13. Organization of Focus	V13. Weight Class of Focus	V13. Type of Visual Element	V13. Weight Class of Focus
V14. Player of Focus	V14. Event of Focus	V14. Source of Visual Element	V14. Event of Focus
V15. Weight Class of Focus		V15. Focus of Tweet	
V16. Event of Focus		V16. Purpose of Tweet	
		V17. Organization of Focus	
		V18. Player of Focus	
		V19. Weight Class of Focus	
		V20. Event of Focus	

visual element. The type of visual element variable contained two additional categories of graphic and poll because of observational analysis of the presence of these elements on Facebook.

Instagram

To code content on Instagram, we identified 14 variables based on previous research related to photographic evaluation of Instagram and Twitter (e.g., Lebel & Danylchuk, 2014). While Instagram is the photo-sharing platform of interest, we consulted content analysis research on photographs posted by wrestling athletes on Twitter because of their associated focus.

Twitter

Content produced on Twitter by USAW was coded according to 20 variables, which derived from previous sport communication research examining content specific to Twitter (e.g., Hambrick, Simmons, Greenhalgh, & Greenwell, 2010; Lebel & Danylchuk, 2012; Pegoraro, 2010). The sender of affiliation, focus of tweet, and purpose of tweet variables were modified from content analyses conducted specifically on Twitter (i.e., Blaszkza, Burch, Frederick, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012; Frederick, Burch, & Blaszkza, 2013).

YouTube

Last, we reviewed previous research and codebooks on YouTube (i.e., Zimmerman, Clavio, & Lim, 2011) to develop the 13 variables for analysis. Variables, such as number of clip views, clip likes, clip dislikes, and clip comments, were modified to enable analysis of features specific to YouTube.

Coding, Reliability, and Data Analysis

To code content across all platforms, two coders were used for this study. Both coders possess earned doctorate degrees in sport management and have a background in content analysis. Before conducting intercoder reliability, each coder received the codebooks and coding protocols with examples of Facebook posts, Instagram photos, tweets, and YouTube videos produced by USAW for training purposes. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2010), a 10–20% subsample of the dataset is an acceptable level for intercoder reliability and to test for chance agreement between coders. Following training, each coder used a subsample of data from each platform to conduct intercoder reliability. This resulted in a random selection of 23 tweets and 31 YouTube videos for coding. Because of imitations with sample size during the event (e.g., two Facebook posts and one Instagram photo posted), subsamples for intercoder reliability were not developed for Facebook and Instagram.

Thus, we coded the entire data set, and not a subsample, specifically for these two platforms. In terms of intercoder reliability, Cohen's kappa coefficients were calculated to determine chance agreement between coders. Minimum agreement levels for Cohen's kappa between .70 and .80 are required to achieve intercoder reliability and test for chance agreement (Riffe et al., 2013; Wimmer & Dominick, 2010). Cohen's kappa coefficients ranged from .77 to 1.00. Upon achieving acceptable reliability levels, remaining data from each platform were distributed evenly between the two coders and analyzed independently.

To analyze data pertaining to each of the first four main research questions, frequency distributions were conducted. Because of the limited number of posts on the platforms of Facebook and Instagram by USAW during the timeframe of the event, small sample sizes limited statistical analysis of frequency distributions. Data analysis to determine fan engagement with posts (e.g., Research Questions 3a and 4a) was conducted through analyses of variance comparing post type with mean number of likes, dislikes, comments, shares, and so forth, specific to each platform. Bivariate correlations were used in the analysis for Research Questions 3b and 4b to identify the effect of hashtags and user tags in post content.

In addition to social media data collection and analysis, we interviewed three individuals from USAW to gather further information on the organization's social media strategy. Upon initial contact with the NGB, interview meetings were finalized in consultation with the USAW Director, and semi-structured phone interviews were performed with William, Director of Partnership Marketing; Maria, Social Media Coordinator; and Robert, Sponsorship Fulfillment Coordinator (all pseudonyms). All interviewees were involved with the NGB's social media strategy for the 2014 NCAA Wrestling Championships. Initially, questions pertained to the overall marketing and social media philosophy of the organization. As conversations progressed, specific inquiries regarding USAW's social media approach for the NCAA Wrestling Championships were posed. Interviews were audio recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. Last, we used the constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998) to find patterns in participants' responses as they related to social media approaches on the four mediums. Qualitative output was managed via NVivo 10 (QSR, International, Doncaster, Australia).

RESULTS

Quantitative Study

The first research question pertained to what types of posts did USAW post on its Facebook account. Of the seven posts published by USAW during the event, three posts had a sport focus. Match highlights also comprised 43.86% of the

types of posts in the dataset. One Facebook post highlighted an individual wrestler. Furthermore, six posts contained a visual element, five of which were photos and one a video. Last, five posts were used for the purpose of information sharing, and two posts were interactive.

Research Question 1a asked how fans engaged with Facebook posts through the use of likes, comments, and shares. As previously referenced, because of the small sample size, the statistical analysis of this research question was limited to frequency statistics. Cumulatively, the seven posts garnered 8,733 likes, 112 comments, and 690 shares. Two posts, both of which contained aerials photos of wrestling mats, received 71.45% ($n = 6,240$) of total likes, 67.86% ($n = 76$) of total comments, and 76.23% ($n = 526$) of total shares. Each post garnered 3,368 and 2,872 likes, 27 and 49 comments, and 269 and 257 shares, respectively. Research Question 1b asked what effect did the use of hashtags (#) and user tags (@) have on post likes and comments. None of the seven posts used either of these conventions.

In terms of Research Question 2, USAW posted a single photo on its Instagram account during the NCAA Championship event. This photo was representative of sport focus that depicted a wrestling mat before a match. Research Question 2a addressed how fans engaged with Instagram photos through the use of likes and comments. The photo posted by the organization acquired 1,556 likes and seven comments. Although statistical analysis outside of descriptive statistics was not possible because of the sample size for Research Question 2b, this photo did contain the hashtag #d1wrestle.

Research Question 3 pertained to types of posts USAW posted on its Twitter account. Posts focusing on individual match highlights ($n = 155$) were the most frequently used by the organization. Media focus were the next most popular type with 18 posts, followed closely by match highlights and specific event focus, alike ($n = 17$). In addition, 14 posts also included sport focus. Of the total 221 tweets posted by USAW, 92.8% were information sharing posts, followed by promotional tweets with 3.2%. Last, five tweets were interactive, whereas four were designed for direct fan engagement. The number of retweets in the Twitter dataset ranged from 1 to 296, with an average of 19.1 retweets ($M = 19.1$, $SD = 30.49$). The number of favorites ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 195, with an average of 25.46 favorites ($M = 25.41$, $SD = 25.78$). Although Twitter interactivity is driven by elements such as links, hashtags, and visuals, these conventions were not featured in the majority of USAW tweets. A similar amount of tweets did not contain a link ($n = 133$) and did not encompass a hashtag ($n = 141$). Last, 67 tweets incorporated a visual element embedded in the content, of which the majority contained a video linked from the USAW YouTube channel.

Research Question 3a asked how fans engaged with posts through retweets and favorites. Analysis of variance results revealed no significant differences between type of post and number of retweets. Nevertheless, a significant difference was found between the type of post and the

number of favorites, $F(4, 216) = 3.68$, $p = .049$, at the $p < .05$ level. The Tukey HSD test for post hoc comparisons indicated the mean number of favorites for sport focus ($M = 40.64$, $SD = 46.73$) was significantly higher than the mean number of favorites for media focus ($M = 12.72$, $SD = 8.21$) at the $p < .05$ level. A bivariate correlation analysis illustrated a significant positive correlation between number of retweets and favorites, $r(219) = 0.90$, $p < .01$. In terms of Research Question 3b, bivariate correlations indicated a negative correlation between the use of hashtags and (a) number of retweets, $r(219) = -0.197$, $p < .01$; and (b) number of favorites, $r(219) = -0.174$, $p < .01$. Namely, as the number of hashtags increased, the number of retweets and favorites decreased. No significant correlation was found between use of user tags and number of retweets or favorites.

Regarding Research Question 4a, USAW used two types of videos during the event: wrestler/athlete interviews and coach interviews. Of the 154 videos posted on YouTube, wrestler/athlete interviews comprised 72.0% and coach interviews 16.0% of the sample. The number of clip views ranged from 0 to 14,115, and the average number of clip views was 1,273 ($M = 1,273.58$, $SD = 2,103.28$). The number of clip likes ranged from 0 to 63 with an average of 5.10 likes ($M = 5.10$, $SD = 9.11$). Clip dislikes ranged from 0 to 7 and averaged 0.19 dislikes ($M = 0.19$, $SD = 0.73$). Last, clip comments ranged from 0 to 14 with a mean of 0.66 comments ($M = 0.66$, $SD = 1.62$). USAW did not embed hashtags and user tags in the YouTube content. >

Because only two types of YouTube videos were used for the event, we performed t tests to determine mean differences between each type of video and the number of clip views, likes, dislikes, and comments. Outcomes indicated no significant differences. Bivariate correlations revealed significant positive relations between the number of clip views and clip likes, $r(152) = 0.914$, $p < .01$, clip views and clip dislikes, $r(152) = 0.712$, $p < .01$, and clip views and clip comments $r(152) = 0.752$, $p < .01$, all at the $p < .01$ level. Bivariate correlations also illustrated a significant positive correlation between the number of clip likes and clip dislikes, $r(152) = 0.677$, $p < .01$, the number of clip likes and clip comments, $r(152) = 0.767$, $p < .01$, and the number of clip dislikes and clip comments, $r(152) = 0.651$, $p < .01$.

Qualitative Study

Interview participants shared their unique perspectives on USAW's marketing and social media approach. There was a consensus on the idea that the organization's social media content is based upon sharing stories about the sport, athletes, and events. William elaborated on the NGB's overarching strategy:

Our social media strategy has three pillars. On the one end, it's rebranding the brand in a way to engage our audience in a different way with us and with themselves. Second, we

want at the same time to reach them in more optimal times, so we have a broader spread. And third, we want to create a competitive advantage compared to other competitors, in our case other NGBs and sport properties.

Simultaneously, the organization uses a customized strategy to align sponsors' images with the respective wrestling stories on social media. For example, for Liberty Mutual, one of USAW's major sponsors, the company's promotional theme revolves around healthy and responsible sports and positive play. William noted:

A lot of sponsors will ask us just to help promote their brand or promote their Facebook so they can get more of a following on their page, like Liberty Mutual. So most of our sponsors have pretty strong wrestling ties. So the businesses are really involved in wrestling, they are not really too off topic to where it hurts our Facebook. Whereas if we are promoting something pertained to the wrestler or the wrestler's parents, I think it could have a negative impact to your Facebook page with having an ad or a promotion.

This is an illustration of USAW's relationship-marketing approach to select sponsors that align with the sport's values and philosophy, while adopting a context-identification approach between social media content and sponsorship promotion.

In terms of the popularity of social media platforms, participants agreed that Facebook and Twitter were the most popular mediums where the organization placed its emphasis in terms of marketing and sponsorship. Maria shared her opinion:

I think Facebook is typically the most, and it depends on what we're posting, but I think Facebook is usually the most interactive and we have the most following, and it's just a wider variety of people. Whereas Twitter, it's popular but it's more of with younger people than an older parent, grandparent kind of following as well.

Robert echoed Maria's statement:

Probably Facebook. I would say that is where people we get the most clicks from. Our YouTube is really frequented as well, but that's sort of two different things, two different concepts. People want to go watch their kid wrestle, they go to our YouTube. They want to find out what's happening, they go to our Facebook or they see it on Facebook. We also integrate the two sometimes, I'll throw stuff from our YouTube on our Facebook page. Facebook is definitely the biggest, and then YouTube and Twitter after that. Our Instagram's actually really interactive. We get a lot of people on it.

These findings concur with Abeza and O'Reilly's (2014) study on the popularity of Facebook among NPOs. Facebook's options for integration and posting of many

different types of content make the site an ideal platform for posting information, one that nonprofit entities use frequently because of its lack of cost and ease of use (Fox, 2013).

When participants were asked to discuss USAW's specific social media strategy for the NCAA Wrestling Championships, they all agreed upon the emphasis on tailored content and the importance of the timing of posts during the event. Robert noted the entity's overall strategy does not really change as a result of the event; however, they provide additional visual content (e.g., photos, videos) to create excitement around the event and coincide with peak social media traffic. In terms of relationship marketing, USAW examines demographic, psychographic, and usage patterns of its target audiences, and tailors content accordingly on the basis of preferences. Social media users are the core of the NGB's marketing strategy. As William purported, "and ultimately, it's also how the consumer will consume the news, so it affects pretty much everything." Specifically for the NCAA Wrestling Championships or other prominent events of USAW, content is essential to engage consumers and develop a sense of excitement and ownership regarding the event. This strategy develops consumers through empowerment, engagement, and belonging through reinforcement of social media exchanges, two-way communication, and an interactive dialogue (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Eventually, such a relationship-building process ideally motivates consumers to become active contributors to the formulation of effective communication channels via social media platforms.

DISCUSSION

This article examined USAW's social media platforms as a bounded unit of study in the NCAA Wrestling Championships. Outcomes of the case study extend previous research on NGBs and the use of social media in the context of relationship marketing (Abeza & O'Reilly, 2014; Eagleman, 2013). Specifically, one of the primary findings was the noteworthy emphasis on information sharing-type posts by USAW across the platforms of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, which constituted the main focus of the quantitative portion of this study. Overall, outcomes of this case study are certainly not generalizable to all NGBs or wrestling-related entities. Nonetheless, managers and administrators of wrestling organizations could apply comparable patterns and insights to their own settings.

Pertaining to Facebook, although USAW posted only seven times during the event, the majority of posts (71.42%) were for the purpose of information sharing. On Instagram, the single post consisting of a photo of a wrestling mat, while containing the hashtag of #d1wrestle and garnering 1,566 likes, prompted only seven comments,

making it more informational and less interactive. Similarly, 70.1% of post types on Twitter were individual match highlights, and 63.8% did not contain a hashtag, which implied these posts were more informational in nature. Last, USAW used only two types of posts on YouTube: wrestler/athletes interviews and coach interviews, with wrestling/athlete interviews comprising 72.0% of the sample.

These results mark a continuation of findings in previous research highlighting an information focus by NPOs and NGBs, first beginning on websites (Girginov et al., 2009) and then transitioning into social media (Abeza & O'Reilly, 2014; Eagleman, 2013; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012). According to Abeza and O'Reilly (2014), emphasis on information-based posts does not maximize the potential benefits of social media, and represents a focus more appropriate to public relations or communications by NSOs rather than enabling marketing features of the platforms (Eagleman, 2013). Girginov and colleagues (2009) referred to such a process as "promoting passive consumer behavior" (p. 177). The lack of interaction resulting from information-based posts does not enable communication between prosumers and sport organizations, namely the value functions of relationship marketing as defined by Williams and Chinn (2010). A more passive employment of social media may not maximize interactive benefits. On the basis of responses from the qualitative interviews, not capitalizing on the interactive benefits of social media aligned with USAW's overall social media strategy, as it placed emphasis on sharing information about the sport, athletes, and events.

This finding also addresses one of the questions posed by Abeza and O'Reilly (2014) "if social media present an ideal platform (at least theoretically) for creating relationship dialogue, then why are the NSOs not utilizing the platforms accordingly?" (p. 123). The answer to this question may be as simple as the notion that creating dialogue may not be an element of their social media strategy. While a focus on information sharing may not be the ideal use of social media, a strategy that places sole emphasis on the interactive elements may not yield maximum results either. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) recommended the optimal use of social media to achieve an organizational mission might combine functional elements of information, community, and action. Nevertheless, it is also pivotal to consider the context of NPOs in terms of human capital and resources. Notably, USAW is responsible for organizing nationwide and state events on a frequent basis. With two full-time employees and an intern dedicated to social media, organizational challenges of maintaining a consistent strategy throughout all USAW-sanctioned events surfaced during the qualitative interviews. Such limitation on human resources dedicated to social media, as well as budgetary considerations for communication campaigns, are common issues that nonprofits in sport encounter on a consistent basis (Eagleman, 2013). Thus, organizational constraints of

this nature cannot be omitted from the discussion of social media strategies for nonprofit wrestling entities as well.

Theoretically, results of this study highlighted the need for granularity in regard to the content of social media posts that move users into the central elements of the relationship-marketing framework and deliver tangible results to organizations. Informational-based posts are used to build a follower base, while the community function engages followers and action messaging produces tangible results for the organization. In this framework, users acquire the information and engagement they desire while the organization benefits as well. This would also address a potential pitfall identified by Girginov and colleagues (2009) in terms of relationship marketing and NPOs—the conflicting objectives between building relationships with current members, while also increasing network size. For organizations such as USAW, moving to a social media model that incorporates the three functions highlighted by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) would allow for the pursuit of both objectives simultaneously.

Additionally, these functional elements could be retained to help NGBs properly execute properly the relationship-marketing model developed by Williams and Chinn (2010). Elements of the information-based functions could enhance the two-way communication between sport organizations and prosumers, while the community-based messages may incorporate the interaction element through engagement. This would assist in establishing a community of followers that see value in the relationship with the sport organization, effectively moving them toward the center of the model-relationship value (Williams & Chinn, 2010). As a result, the action function could be more effectively implemented. To that end, Eagleman and Krohn (2012) suggested individuals who possessed higher levels of involvement with an organization's website were more likely to display purchase behavior toward sponsor products. As action functions bring tangible value to the organization, this elusive element may be a precursor of continued success for NGBs, most of whom receive little or no support for marketing or sponsorship initiatives (Eagleman, 2013).

Practical Implications

The current economic environment and the increased competition among sport-related NPOs interested in enhancing the relationship dialogue with their partners have strategic implications. Depending on their context, nonprofit wrestling organizations could use the information function of social media to facilitate dialogue and incorporate interaction elements of the relationship-marketing model (Williams & Chinn, 2010). For example, wrestling represents an amateur niche sport founded upon grassroots participation. The individualistic and nostalgic nature of the sport, partially because of its identity and association with ancient and contemporary

Olympic Games, may influence the communication process of the governing body through social media posts and respective content. To this extent, organizations should constantly assess their identity and image and integrate community and action elements in their social media strategy to capitalize on relationship-marketing initiatives. As relationships that bring value may not be developed quickly, the continued emphasis on the information function could at minimum accomplish one of the two functions highlighted by Girginov and colleagues (2009), which is to increase network size.

An additional practical implication illuminated through the qualitative aspect of this study was the need to establish links with sponsors more overt in the eyes of consumers. While it was discussed that sponsors such as Liberty Mutual do emphasize similar health benefits with USAW, this may not have been highlighted and translated in content that was more informational and focused on success of wrestlers and coaches. Therefore, the community function could assist in promoting messages of recognition or appreciation to sponsors and integrate businesses into the USAW online community. Moreover, informational-based posts that explicitly focus on the alignment between USAW and healthy initiatives by Liberty Mutual would only support the integration process, resulting in greater visibility and exposure. Such an approach could provide a tangible return on investment for the sponsor through linkages between website involvement and likelihood of purchasing sponsor products (Eagleman & Krohn, 2012).

The contrast in USAW's use of the various social media platforms is intriguing, especially in light of the statements from interviewees on their views of social media use. While two of the individuals involved in USAW's noted the importance of Facebook, the platform had only seven posts during the NCAA event, with two of those consisting of photos of wrestling mats with no match occurring at the time of the photo. Wrestling is a dynamic sport that lends itself to visuals depicting match action. This could be an area of opportunity for USAW as the photos contained on Facebook and in the single Instagram post in the analysis were static visuals, and not included in the social media strategy. USAW could capitalize on the both mediums, and in particular Instagram, to spotlight wrestling's action.

Official websites operated by sport organizations have an opportunity to disseminate their optimal presentation of events (Pronschinske et al., 2012). At first glance, USAW's heavy usage of YouTube is sensible, since sport highlights lend themselves to visual presentations. In addition, the use of Twitter to post links to the NGB's YouTube channel further improves the chances of lasting engagement, as YouTube visits tend to be of longer duration than other social media platforms (Judson et al., 2012). However, YouTube videos featured no highlights. Rather, the video platform simply showcased interviews, which did align with USAW's perceived social media strategy. Analogous to recommendations regarding Facebook and Instagram, this outcome represents an

area of opportunity for USAW to highlight the level of athleticism inherent to wrestling in a visual manner.

The reasoning for a more informational-based approach to social media coverage of the NCAA Championships could be sponsor-related. Notably, interviewees' statements on their ideal use of social media focused more on response levels they received through various platforms, possibly to increase sponsorship awareness rather than on select strategies as a result of initial connections formed with users. Despite the fact that interviewees concurred on the popularity of Facebook and Instagram among their users, the organization's social media use during the NCAA event could capitalize further on the opportunity to engage these users. USAW has been acknowledged and awarded for its emphasis on social media use and innovative marketing techniques among other USOC entities. The organization could cultivate on engagement through social media, an action that might lead to better connections (Borges & Verissimo, 2014) with target publics and an increase in brand loyalty (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012; Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013; Naylor, Lamberton, & West, 2012).

Limitations and Future Research

As with any case study, these results are not without limitations. The primary limitation was that data were collected and analyzed only during the duration of the NCAA Division I Championships, and may not be collectively representative of the entire body of USAW's social media efforts. The decision to delimit the sample to a specific event had an effect on an overall smaller sample size. Nonetheless, findings of this case study did align with previous research on social media use and relationship marketing. Furthermore, sample sizes for Facebook and Instagram limited the depth of analysis that could be performed, specifically relative to the interactive elements of the platforms such as hashtags and usertags (i.e., "@ symbols).

In light of these limitations, future research could examine multiple wrestling events longitudinally not only in terms of the type of content produced by wrestling organizations on social media, but whether trends in use arise. Comparison studies could be also performed in relation to other wrestling organizations (e.g., National Wrestling Coaches Association), as well as between different countries. Such a comparison would allow for input on how different factors such as profile of the organization's registered members, sponsorship structure, and the role of other stakeholders affect social media usage. It is timely and of importance to assess how organizational considerations such as human resources and budgetary constraints within non-profit wrestling entities have an effect on the entity's social media strategy and implementation. Future research could also examine varying methodological approaches to the study of social media and determine if different operational definitions would provide more granular results.

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